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SOME
SCRIPTURAL
DIRECTIONS AND ADVICE

TO ASSIST THE
FAITH AND PRACTICE
OF
TRUE BELIEVERS,

To promote a Life of

FAITH AND HOLINESS,

AND

An Increase of all Grace and Peace in their Souls.

THE THIRD EDITION,

CORRECTED AND MUCH ENLARGED.

To which is added,

Two CONSOLATORY LETTERS,

Written by an eminent Christian, (now with God)

To one who seemed to be near his Dissolution.

Exhort one another daily, that ye be not slothful, but followers of them,
who through faith and patience inherit the promises. HEB. iii. 13.
and vi. 12.

Press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in
Christ Jesus. PHILIP. iii. 14.

Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and
watching thereunto with all perseverance. EPH. vi. 18.

All things are possible to him that believeth. MARK IX. 23.

L O N D O N,

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M D C C X C I.





S O M E

SCRIPTURAL DIRECTIONS, &c.

HAVING experienced much of the rich mercy, free love and grace of God in Christ Jesus, and being come to the verge of life, I would attempt to write some plain rules of holy living, to assist the faith and practice of weak believers, which I have found useful. Nor shall I write any thing but what I know by experience; or any thing to please the critical or curious; or any points of doctrine not absolutely necessary to salvation. 'Tis only the plain, sincere humble Christian, that I expect will regard or profit by what I write. And may the blessed Redeemer condescend to bless and sanctify it by his Spirit, to his glory, and the good of many souls!

The first step to a life of faith in Christ, is, to know our dreadful, miserable state by nature:—dead in trespasses and sins—at enmity with God—under the curse of the law—slaves to sin and Satan—yet so blind in heart, as to be quite ignorant of our misery, and without *will* or *power* to deliver ourselves. * 'Till the Lord convinceth us of this—we never seek a remedy—see no great need of a Saviour—or ever seek to Christ to be saved. Most people will tell you, they always did believe; and this plainly proves they know not what *saving* faith is; such may believe the Gospel history to be true; but this will not reveal Christ in the heart—or unite the soul to him, to receive pardon, grace, and salvation, thro' faith: To such I can only say—that they should cry mightily to God, to be enlightened and taught of God; to be born of his Spirit, that they may see the kingdom of God, or the nature and excellency of spiritual things, and to be enabled to believe on Christ so as to be saved. Many serious people trust only in a round of duties—expect to be saved for their moral

* See my *Earnest Address to all Professing Christians*, Price 6d.

and religious performances; without knowing whether they ever were regenerated, or born anew of the Spirit of God, or savingly believed on Jesus Christ for their salvation. Such as these are greatly to be pitied, and are the hardest to be convinced that they are not safe: the doctrines such sit under, blind and harden them; perhaps, all they hear of the way to be saved, is, Do this, and do that, and all is well; without ever being told, the dreadful diseases of their souls, or the great Physician pointed out, who alone can heal them. This is full as absurd, as it would be in a physician to say to a sick or dying man, 'Get up, and go about your business!' without applying any medicines or means to remove the disease.—If any are troubled in mind or distressed for sin, fearing to be lost, and enquiring how they can be saved; they are commonly told by their teachers, 'not to be troubled about such things; that they are honest people—never did any harm—that they are safe enough—God is merciful, &c. &c.' But tell them not of God's mercy and free salvation in Christ, nor the necessity of Faith, whereby the soul receives pardon, grace, and eternal life, as the free gift of God in Christ: Multitudes of poor souls are led blindfold to eternal destruction by such blind, unscriptural delusions! yet these are the common doctrines preached at this day, to the utter ruin of poor souls! This is not preaching the Gospel of Christ to poor sinners, but Pagan morality, or Popish doctrine of *works*: or, as if we were perfect creatures, without original sin and corruption, and had power to fulfill the whole law of God. But this is as contrary to the gospel salvation and God's way of saving sinners as the East is from the West, or light to darkness, and no people are more blind or further removed from salvation by Grace, than these that sit under such doctrines; nay, none have commonly so much enmity against it: like the Pharisees and Scribes of old, none hated and persecuted Christ and his followers so much as they.

I have great tenderness and concern for such; I feel for them and pity them: for I was many years in the same state, and can tell from experience, how blind, ignorant, and prejudiced the mind became by false doctrine against God's way of free salvation by Grace. Christ says, "The publicans

publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven, before such self-righteous persons."

I am apt to think some persons may be regenerated, yet the principle of light and grace may be so weak, and buried under so much darkness and ignorance, that little effects of it may appear for a long time; for the Spirit's operation is exceedingly various in this work: sometimes 'tis very powerful, like a strong mighty wind; this makes the work and it's effects very evident: but at other times, 'tis like a gentle soft wind, breathing on the soul, quickening it to a spiritual life; this makes the work less evident, though the effects will be the same: and some are regenerated in such early years, that they cannot tell the time, &c. But if it be a vital principle of life from the Spirit of God, it will operate in time, and lead the soul to know its state and its want of Christ; and the same Spirit will in time reveal Jesus Christ, create saving faith, open the eyes of the mind to see Christ and his unsearchable riches; and to see the glory and excellency of spiritual things. Many people I believe would earnestly seek to secure their eternal salvation, did they not conclude they were in a safe state already; tho' perhaps they are not so much as in the way of salvation; do not so much as know it; but are ignorant of that only "true foundation which the Lord hath laid in Sion. Many know not that Christ is the *only* way to God: None cometh to the Father, but by Him: He is the true and living way. Yet this way of salvation is little known—"The people perish for lack of knowledge!" 'Tis easy to convince notorious sinners, that a great change is needful; but those who are strict in outward duties, and blameless in the eye of the world; 'tis strange to them, if you tell them, they are not safe. Yet the Word of God tells us, "that, by nature, we are all children of wrath—at enmity against God—under the curse of the Law of God," hating holiness: yet so blind, that we know it not; so dreadfully fallen, by original sin, that we have no power to heal or help ourselves, no will or desire to be renewed; but think we are very safe: or, if not, *intend* to grow better, and do something, one time or other, to please God, and prepare ourselves for Heaven. Thus most are deceived, by supposing themselves safe, when they are in the high road to destruction, and ignorant of the way of

salvation. "Narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matt. vii. 14.

The Scripture says, "No foundation can be laid for salvation, but Jesus Christ. He is the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father, but by him. He is the rock of our salvation, against which the gates of Hell shall not prevail. But none can savingly believe in Christ, but by the Holy Ghost; none but those taught of God truly come to Christ." 'Tis a work of God to believe in Christ. "No man cometh to me except the Father draw him," John vi. 29. 44. 'Till we are taught of God, we cannot discern the nature of spiritual things: No man knoweth the things of God, but by the Spirit of God: They seem foolishness to all natural men; nor can they know them, because they are only spiritually discerned. 1 Cor. ii. 11. 14. Nor can man's wisdom or learning help him: for that can give no principle of spiritual light to discern them by. This is the cause that spiritual things are explained away, and reason is set up as the judge and rule to explain the wonderful things of God, tho' as far above reason, as the heavens are above the earth. Until the soul be quickened, and the mind enlightened by the Spirit of God, there is no faculty of light or power in the mind to understand or conceive spiritual things: We may as well try to reach Heaven with our hands, or a blind man see natural things without eyes, as to discern and believe heavenly things, without the Spirit of God. Human learning and man's wisdom can only teach natural things, and therefore the most learned men may be quite ignorant of the things of God; and the Lord often "hides them from the wise and prudent, and yet reveals them unto babes," to humble the pride of all flesh.

But all those who are taught of God, and have savingly believed on Jesus Christ for salvation, can remember the time when they were blind, and believed not; and can say with the man in the gospel, "one thing I know; whereas once I was blind, now I see." These know, that they "were brought out of nature's darkness into marvelous light; have seen the light and glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ; and are in some measure changed into the image of Christ, by beholding his glory by faith." To such as these, Christ is precious; he is the life and por-
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tion of their souls; they long and desire to know and believe on the Lord Jesus more and more: and it is to these chiefly I would beg to observe the following rules and means, which will, through the blessing of Christ, increase knowledge, faith, divine love, grace, and peace in the soul: Also as I go along, I will point out what appears to me to hinder and prevent the soul's growth in faith, grace, true holiness, &c.

First, Divine Faith is the root and spring of all grace, holiness, consolation, and peace in the soul; for, by faith we receive Christ to dwell in our hearts, to impart light, grace, strength, and all spiritual life to the soul. By faith, the soul is vitally united to the Lord, as a branch is to a vine; and by acting faith on him, we live and grow in him, feeding on him, drawing spiritual life from him more abundantly: for Christ is a vital *head* of all divine influences to the soul, and without him, we can do nothing good. See John xv. 4, 5. 'Tis of great use to understand, and experience well, first, what Christ hath done *for* us; and, secondly, what he hath wrought *inwardly* on our hearts and souls, by his Spirit; to know, whether what the word and promise of Christ teach and declare, be really imparted to the soul, through the teaching and witnessing power of the Spirit of God.—'Tis this enables the soul to apprehend Christ in all his saving offices; to see and receive him as an *all-sufficient* Saviour: to rest and firmly depend on the word and promise of God, in Christ, to save us *freely* from all sin, guilt, and misery; and to bring us to life, grace, and glory; working in us both to will and perform what the Lord commands in his word. Faith is the gift of God; the work of his Spirit in us; giving the soul power to believe and rest on the faithful word and promises of God; also to see all is a free gift of God's love to poor sinners in Christ. No conditions, but *believe* and *receive*: all the blessings of the Gospel are thus free. "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life, freely. According to your faith, be it unto you. All things are possible to him that believeth. Whatsoever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." These are the Gospel terms; and in proportion as faith increases, or is in exercise, all grace, joy, peace, love, and delight in God, and all spiritual light and life will grow and flourish in the soul;

soul; whereby it will be changed into the image of Christ, and go from strength to strength, from faith to faith, from grace to grace, till we arrive at glory. Faith is a great mystery; a wonderful thing! none know what it is, but those who have it; none know the want of it, but those who have received some measure of it. The natural man knows nothing of it: its nature, efficacy, or constraining power to love and obey God; to bring Christ into the heart, to make him precious to the soul, to enable us to overcome the world; to delight in God, his word, way, ordinances, and all holy, spiritual exercises. Nor do those who have light in the mind only, or notions or opinions in the head only, and not the love and power of them in the heart; these know not what true saving faith working by love is: But suppose head-knowledge to be faith; and assent to the gospel truths to be saving:—I have been in both these states, when I had no true faith; was confident I had it, and not sensible of the want of it. After I obtained clear notions in my head, I was certain, then all was right and safe. But, when favoured with the power of divine things in my heart, I found the former as a shadow only, and this the substance. An inward experience of the things believed, wrought in the heart by the Spirit of God, is that which alone can keep the soul steady and unmoved, amidst all the specious cavils and reasonings of men: All short of experience, seem only notions and opinions in the head. True faith purifies the heart; subdues sin; purges from idols, lusts, &c. Faith overcomes the world, works by love into all holy obedience, drawing the soul to delight in God and his service. Saving faith is sanctifying; transforming the soul into the image of Christ. See what fruits thy faith produceth: Is thy heart, will, and affections truly and savingly changed? Raised to things above? Is thy worldly selfish spirit cast out? art thou humble, holy, patient, &c.? Beware of resting in any thing short of this: True faith empties and humbles the soul, makes it go poor and naked to Christ, to receive Him for its *whole* salvation, to dwell in us as the hope of glory. By faith, we see Jesus Christ fulfilling the law, working out a perfect righteousness for us, and offering himself up as a perfect sacrifice and atonement for all our sins, also entered into Heaven.

Heaven for us, to intercede for us, to be our advocate; and, by faith, all the promises of God are ours. If Christ be yours, all is yours; life, death, things present and things to come. 1 Cor. iii. 22. In the old covenant of works, Do this, and live; obey, without sin, and obtain life. In the new covenant of *free* grace, Believe, and be saved: "He that believeth shall be saved." He that worketh not (for salvation) but believeth on him (Christ) who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Rom. iv. 4. Faith receiveth all salvation, freely, as God's gift of love. This is a mystery which God alone can teach the soul to know experimentally. Reason, unbelief, and unbelievers think this faith dangerous, presumptuous; and plead, It is good to doubt, to fear, and not rest or trust too confidently on what Christ hath done, or what God hath promised. This is fighting against God. But those who have believed, have the witness of God's Spirit, sealing God's promises to them; enabling them to receive pardon of all sins, through the blood of Christ, and justification and acceptance, through Christ's righteousness imputed to them; and trust to be sanctified by Christ's Spirit dwelling in them, imparting a new nature. We should resist and oppose all doubts and unbelief, as the enemies of our souls peace; and strive to believe; hope, against hope; and fear nothing but sin and unbelief; for in proportion as faith increases, so will all grace, comfort, life, and peace, grow and increase in the soul.

Secondly. In order to obtain an increase of faith and every grace and blessing, we must pray much. Prayer is both a duty, and such a privilege as is productive of every grace and blessing. Oh! what may not be expected from the prayer of Faith! what is it God hath not promised to those that ask in Christ's name! By this, a believer may certainly grow in knowledge, faith, wisdom, grace, patience, peace, and rest of soul. How amazing it is, that the great God has permitted such worms to come into his presence! to make all our requests known to him; promising to hear our prayers, to fulfill our desires! bids us wait upon him; and hath opened a new and living way to the throne of grace, through the vail of Christ's flesh, who pleads our cause and the merits of his own blood! and says

says unto us, "Ask what you will, in my name, and I will do it: nay, Ask, and receive; that your joy may be full!" Now, did we truly believe this—we should diligently seek and embrace every opportunity for prayer—should go before the Lord with all our concerns, troubles and distresses—should lay all our affairs before the Lord, for council, comfort and direction on all occasions; looking up to God, as the Almighty King and supreme Lord of all things, (yet our God and Father in Christ) for his grace and blessing to attend us in all places; to guide, support, go with us, and be with us on all occasions; and go no where, or undertake nothing without prayer. All believers think this ought to be: yet, how backward, how loath to pray, are most! rather talk of it, than do it! certainly this is unbelief: for, did we truly believe that God would hear every prayer, and return a blessing every time we pray, it would be impossible to be so remiss as many of us are. Did we really believe and expect to receive some precious blessing every time we asked, how diligent should we be, to find occasions for prayer! to improve all spare minutes for this blessed exercise! Five or ten minutes often spent in fervent prayer, what great blessings might it bring down upon us! and how many such spaces of time might we find in a day, were we diligent to improve them! Do we want more faith, love, grace, and to delight more in God; to be strong in Christ; to have more of his fullness of grace, peace, and presence? We should *pray* more: be more at the Fountain of life, drawing by faith out of the unsearchable riches of Christ, who hath said, "Seek, and ye shall find: Ask, and ye shall receive." This would more endear and draw the soul to Christ! beget more faith, love, and sweet union and communion with him; give the soul a holy freedom at the throne of grace, and beget a holy familiar converse between Christ and the soul; increasing the spirit and power, as well as the habit of prayer. But most live at a distance from God, speak seldom to him in prayer; are so remiss, nay, unwilling to be employed in this sweet profitable, divine exercise! had rather talk and complain of spiritual wants, than pray much to him, who can and will give abundantly to them who wait upon him, and ask in faith. "Ye have not, because ye ask not," saith the Apostle.

Apostle. If ye want faith in prayer, will, or power to pray; Ask, and it shall be given you. We must pray, that we may be enabled to pray: Prayer increaseth prayer. Oh! the soul refreshments that flow from the receivings of faith, grace, and peace, obtained by prayer, through the prevalent intercession of Jesus Christ! how sweet to draw nigh to God, as our God and Father in Christ! to be often in converse with the Almighty, in audience with Jehovah! to show him all our troubles, wants, soul diseases; to cast every burthen and care upon him! Christ hath purchased all grace and every blessing for us: prayer is the way and means to obtain them. "Christ is entered into Heaven, now, to appear in the presence of God for us!" He offers our poor prayers enriched and perfumed with the incense of his own merits! Oh! who can tell the glorious privileges and blessings of Christ's intercession at the throne of grace! He who loved us, and died for us, who ever liveth to be our Advocate! The incarnate God! who hath all power in Heaven and Earth! says unto us, "Come unto me: Ask what you will, &c." Oh! let us, my friends, go boldly to the throne of grace, in full assurance of faith! Through His infinite merits, we may enter within the veil, and take hold on the Almighty's strength!

I verily believe, that most of that coldness, deadness, darkness, want of faith and comfort in the souls of many, is for want of more frequent and fervent prayer: It is prayer brings a blessing on the word of God, read or preached, and on all ordinances: but without much prayer, all will be in vain. We may read and talk ourselves out of all religion, without much prayer. Pray much, tho' you read little; said the divine Mr. Hervey. After the Apostle had pointed out all the parts of the spiritual armour, in Ephes. vi, he brings in "ALL PRAYER and supplication, watching unto it with all perseverance, as the great instrument to enable us to use the armour of God aright:" without this, they will be of little use to us, nor shall we fight the fight of faith. Prayer brings the influences of Christ's Spirit into our souls, both to subdue sin and corruption in us, and to transform us into his blessed image, to make us meet for glory. All those holy, heavenly men of old, were much in prayer, lived a life of prayer, three or four hours or more spent every day in prayer, this enabled them to live wholly

wholly unto God; to be heavenly minded. Nor did I ever hear or read of, or know any one, who grew much in the divine life of faith and love, who did not pray much, and often. A man of much prayer, is a man of much grace; said holy Mr. Hervey. But, oh! the little prayer which contents many at this day! perhaps, only in the family, or some short general prayers serve them: no wonder faith, zeal, love, and grace are at such a low ebb as we see in most! Many tell you, they have not time; yet can find time for any thing beside. Some say, they want the grace and spirit of prayer: let such wait much upon the Lord in prayer, and they shall receive both. Many of old spent much of the night in prayer, who wanted time in the day: And some I know, now, who will arise early to pray, or sit up late to converse with God; and such are the only persons I know, who grow in true faith, real holiness, and the vital power of religion; and to such *only*, the Lord reveals himself as he doth not unto the world. There is a mystery in holy living which none experience, but those who are much in prayer; these are changed daily more and more into the image of Christ. There arises a peculiar sort of knowledge, from practical Godliness, far different from speculative knowledge, notions, and opinions; this is *Experience*; which none know, but *experienced* Christians. Such can discern, what others cannot. A man who travels *through* a country, has a far different sort of knowledge of it, than one who views it only in a *Map*.—Prayer is a direct application to the blessed God himself; an immediate intercourse with the Fountain of all goodness, blessedness, power, and grace! it is holding communion with the infinite God in Christ, whose presence creates heaven in the soul! what divine blessed influences must the soul receive, from this constant and blessed exercise! In prayer, the soul puts forth acts of faith, hope, love, trust, and confidence in God. This is a divine exercise of all grace; It must therefore be of wonderful benefit to the soul! well might the Psalmist say, “It is good for me to draw near to God!” In prayer, we can plead Christ’s merits, God’s covenant and promises; and it is of great use in prayer, to plead these, and to have right and clear conceptions of God’s free love, his covenant of grace, and that all is freely given to us out of infinite love, and flows to poor sinners

sinners through the blood, merits, and intercession of Jesus Christ. It is of great use in prayer, to remember what the Lord hath already done for us, saving us from our wickedness, sin and blood, blindness, and misery; from the slavery of sin and Satan, to be heirs of God; his adopted children, in Christ! how he hath preserved us, blessed us, given us all we enjoy, and will bless us with all spiritual blessings in Christ, and bring us to eternal life and glory through him! This must raise the soul to love, praise, and delight in God, and increase faith, hope, trust, and confidence in him. We should be particular in giving thanks for particular mercies; and be particular in our requests to God, "pour out our hearts before him:" be particular in confession, in petitions, in thanksgivings, in intercessions for all men, more especially for the glory and increase of Christ's kingdom; for the whole household of faith; for particular friends and causes; for faithful preachers; and be very particular to intercede for those, to whose souls we desire to do good; to lay their cases before the Lord, and to vary our petitions as their state requireth: This is the way to be useful to them, and for the Lord to bless our endeavours for their good.

Thirdly. To *watch* unto prayer—to watch the frame of our spirits in prayer; to watch unto times and seasons of prayer; to beware that nothing prevents prayer, or that it be not slightly performed, is a duty of vast importance. Suffer not Satan, sloth, talking, or any thing to rob the soul of these precious seasons of drawing near to God, to receive all blessings thereby. It will be of great use to have stated times for prayer; when most at quiet, alone, or when business permits: and to suffer nothing to divert us from these, but watch to perform the duty as if salvation depended upon it. If faith be weak, and the soul dry, and unfit for prayer, yet let us go and attempt our duty in the name and strength of Christ, putting forth the withered hand as the Lord commandeth. While we attempt the outward act, the Lord may give us the spirit of prayer: This I have often found, in low, dead frames; as if I had no power or strength; yet, on attempting the duty, strength, faith, and power have been given; and when it is not, the Lord will accept the will: and I have thought those prayers the most acceptable, because there was most self-denial, and such

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dryness, that nothing but Christ's merits and intercession could give us to hope for acceptance. It is a great mistake, as it appears to me, to neglect prayer, as many do, because they are unfit, and have no good frame. Oh! let us go in the strength of the Lord! Put forth the withered hand: The Lord will help you. Do not say, you cannot pray, and so (as many do) omit the duty! You can attempt the *act* of Prayer: Let me persuade you to do it constantly, and you will find the benefit great. We know not what the Lord will enable us to do, 'till we make trial. I know Satan, self, sloth, unbelief, &c. will all plead against this: But, let faith and the word of the Lord prevail!

Watch, and see what answers to Prayer you receive; observe how good and faithful the Lord is, in granting the requests of them that fear him: see what a gracious God, hearing prayer, you have. How must it draw the soul to love and adore the wonderful God, who condescends to hear such vile worms!—"I will love the Lord, because he hath heard my prayer: because he hath inclined his ear unto me, I will call upon him as long as I live." Psalm cxvi. 1. 2. To see how the Lord answers our prayers will also much increase faith, hope, trust, and confidence in him; it will give us to have sweet experience of the truth and faithfulness of God's word and promises: This will encourage us to pray more and more, to fly unto him as our refuge, to call upon him continually; for we never seek his face in vain. We should also confidently expect answers to all our prayers which are according to his word: We honour the Lord by trusting in him, and expecting firmly what he hath promised: It will be according to our faith, "Ask what ye will in my name, I will do it." And that blessed promise, Mark xi. 23. 24. "Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray: believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." What a mystery of faith is here! But, if we pray, and yet expect not answers, according to God's word; it is no wonder if we have them not. Oh! let us stir up faith and hope! It is not that we are worthy: but that Jesus is worthy! and all is freely given through Him. Open wide the mouth of faith, and God will fill it.

I hope none will be offended, if I presume to point out some method and times of prayer. In the morning, before we engage in any business, or suffer our thoughts to dwell

dwell on any thing, our hearts should be lifted up to God; and, as soon as we are drest, we should fall down before him, and offer up body, soul, and spirit to God, in Christ: to adore, worship, and praise the glorious tri-une God! we should pray to be kept, taught, sanctified, directed and governed in all things by him, and make suitable petitions as our state requireth: If we have no family to pray with, to make this more particular and solemn; if we have families, to make it more short and general. After breakfast, or before dinner, to pray again: and again after dinner, or in the afternoon. In the evening to pray secretly again and once or twice to add intercessions for all men, as above; besides family prayer in the evening. I know several eminent christians use this method, who grow much in grace, &c. I am aware it will be said, "Few have so much time or opportunity for Prayer." I answer if we would try, we might find time enough. I see in most, many spaces of time wasted in a day, which would serve for this purpose. It may be said, "Some time is needful to relax the body and mind." I answer, if we did delight in God, nothing would more refresh and comfort us than holding communion with him; and this way of much prayer is the means to enable us to delight in God. We love to converse with those we love; desire to be with them; watching to seek occasions of being with them; and will pretend many things to enjoy what we love. Thus it would be in drawing near to the Lord in prayer, did we heartily love God. It would pain the soul to be kept from waiting upon him. Nor will it hinder business; for the blessing of the Lord is that which gives success and peace in business; and also, the Lord giveth power and ability to dispatch business faster and better than if we neglect prayer; and I have heard some say, that they have done more business, in less time, than when they prayed less. Nor do I know any, more diligent, or who dispatch more business, than those who pray much and often: "For unless the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it, though they rise up early and sit up late."

I have been longer upon Prayer, because it is this brings a blessing on every other means, and without this, all other means will profit little. I also see how remiss almost all are in this great duty. What little prayer contents most! They

had rather do any thing than pray;—live at a distance from God—will not come to him often, to have life and grace more abundantly. Family duty only, contenteth some: and some short general prayer beside, contenteth more. Alas! Is this “to pray always? without ceasing? to labour in prayer? to strive, to wrestle, to watch unto it? to abound in it? &c. &c.” This seems the real cause of that cold, dead, lukewarm state of many: of that low state of knowledge, faith, and grace in others; of that darkness and discomfort in many. Besides, if Prayer bringeth not the continual influences of Christ into the soul, to keep and water it always, Satan, the world, or some sin creeps in, and we grow remiss in every duty; formality prevails; the vital power of godliness withers and decays; faith is not in exercise; zeal and love grow cold; Satan’s devices are less dreaded; a form without the power, or a worldly spirit possesseth us. This is the state of many at this day. None grow in grace, or in faith, or are conformed to the image of Christ, but those who are much with God in prayer: Such, only, know the secrets of God: are familiar with the Lord; can apply to him on all occasions; the Lord sheweth them his covenant. We are beset and tempted with evils; We wrestle not only with flesh and blood, but powerful, dreadful spirits of darkness, who watch to assault and ruin our souls! What great need then, “to pray always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, with all perseverance; that we may stand in the evil day of temptation! *”

Fourthly. Watchfulness and Self-denial are of great importance to advance the soul in holy living. To watch against all sin, and all occasions which lead to sin; to watch our own hearts; and to know ourselves truly. Self-knowledge is of singular use, to try and examine our hearts, the ways and motives of all we do; whether God’s glory be the end and design of all we do, or whether to please ourselves or the world, or whether custom be the spring of our actions. God’s glory ought to be the aim and design of all

* Mr. HENRY, on these words, in Psalm cix. “But I give myself unto Prayer,” thus expounds them. “I am for Prayer; I am a man of Prayer; I love Prayer, and prize Prayer, and practise Prayer, and make a business of Prayer; and am in my element when I am at Prayer.—A good man is made up of Prayer; GIVES HIMSELF TO PRAYER, as the Apostles did. Acts vi. 4.”

we do, this is that which God looketh at. Oh! 'tis a great thing to have an eye to the glory of God in all our actions! Much self-knowledge is needful to enable us to try and examine all we do. Many actions have all the appearances of being good; yet, perhaps, self-love, self-will, self-pleasing, or, because just at that time we had a mind to do so, was the motive, not God's will and glory. Perhaps, if our mind had not been to do it, we should have left it undone, tho' commanded of God. Oh! this *self* is a subtle enemy; it robs God of his glory! 'tis an *heart* idol; and often appears so specious, so disguised, that unless taught of God we cannot discern it, self-love and our own wills do so blind us. Self wants to be pleased, to be applauded and esteemed; whereas, *Self-denial*, mortification of, and renouncing our own wills, is the first lesson that Christ hath taught. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Nay "We must cut off right hands, pluck out right eyes, or we cannot be the disciples of Christ." This makes "The way to life so narrow, that few there be that find it." We must watch, to see whether our actions are according to our prayers. Do we strive to perform what we pray to do, and shun and avoid what we pray to be delivered from? If we do not, we mock God, and deceive our own souls. Do we pray against sin and temptation? do we take due care to avoid all occasions that may lead to them? do we fight the fight of faith, deny our wills, affections, and appetites, mortify the flesh, and press forward in the way of our duty in all things? do we follow Christ as our example; praying, striving to grow into his humble and patient self-denying spirit?—I know many will say, "That they cannot do any thing; Nothing can they do;" and so do not *attempt* to press forward in the way of duty, or stir up the grace of God that is in them, but indulge sloth, indolence, and neglect of duty. But, do such expect to grow in grace, in faith, holiness, assurance, or heavenly mindedness; while they neglect the means of grace God has appointed for that end? Is this to follow Christ's Word and example, "to deny ourselves—to crucify the flesh—to cut off right hands—to pray always, and not to faint?" No: 'Tis directly opposite to scripture rules.—Sloth, unbelief, and Antinomian delusions may say, Alas; We are so weak,

so indisposed, that we cannot attempt the duty, &c." But, I reply, in Dr. Owen's words, "You will not. You will not part with your ease—will not crucify your lusts—you will not deny yourselves, nor use all diligence, or stir up the gift of God that is in you!—But you *must* do all this, and more, or you will never attain Peace or Assurance, but spend your days in darkness, and lie down in sorrow. To offer comfort to such loose walkers, is to give them poison: Reproof and admonition is proper. Ye are idle: Arise from your sloth; use all diligence; meditate, watch, pray much; keep your hearts; search, try, examine yourselves; fly temptations: be diligent in all means of grace, and do you *abound* in them; or you are not faithful to your own souls."——Dr. Preston says, "The reason that so many lose the fervour, life, and power of religion, is, because they grow remiss in *secret* Prayer: The sacred fire goes out for want of the fuel of Prayer. If you'd be revived, &c. *Repent, and do thy first works*: that is, Use thy former diligence in calling upon God! This will bring divine influences of grace to renew your strength and quicken your souls. When the soul is in low, dull, dead frames, and unfit for Prayer; then we should by all means set about the duty; this is the season that we want most to pray: this is, *to arise and take hold on the strength of God.*"

They that are regenerated and truly united to Christ by Faith, have a principle of life from him; and life has a power to *act*. To what purposes are we commanded to watch, pray, strive, and use all diligence to grow in grace, if we had *no* power? All the pressing exhortations in Scripture would be absurd and useless, if we were only as stocks and stones: But this is Antinomian delusion! Such are possessed of a lazy, slothful spirit; deceived by Satan, carnal security, &c. 'Tis also rank unbelief and rebellion against God, to disregard and set at nought his commands and precepts, which are the means he has appointed for us to obtain growth in all grace. Can such be sincere? Can such expect to grow into a meetness for Heaven—while they despise or neglect the very means God has ordained for that end? Is it not much to be feared that such have no true faith or grace—are no *true believers*—and have only got notions and opinions in their heads instead of Christ in the *heart*? Mr. Flavel

vel says, in his *Saint indeed*, " I do avow, if that ever you attain *peace* and *assurance* in God's ordinary way, you must take pains, with your *hearts*; &c. " There are seasons when sound believers are in dull, unspiritual frames: And, weak believers find little power, life, or strength in holy duties. But such are not satisfied; they will not rest in such sloth, indolence, and neglect of duty; but, like the Spouse in the Canticles, *arise* and seek the Lord, in every means of Grace. Cant. iii. 2. 3. 4. We can do the outward act; we can force ourselves to attempt Prayer, Reading, &c. And, whilst we go forth to attempt our duty in the outward act, the Lord does often give inward power, life, and strength to perform that duty: This I have often experienced. When we are in the way of our duty, God meets us and blesteth us. 'Tis also an act of faith when we are dry and unfit for holy duties, to attempt them, believing we shall find the Lord, this way, to help and to work in us both to will and to perform aright. " Seek, and ye shall find; Ask, and ye shall receive, " says Christ. This I have found true. To seek, is to attempt our duty—tho' we be dull, cold, and dead, yet let us go to him in holy duties, that we may be quickened, and ' receive life more abundantly ! '

God's ways are contrary to all our *natural* affections, ways, and desires; the doctrines of Christ are quite opposite to the *flesh*. It is the doctrine of the Cross, (utterly opposite to all the ways, wisdom, and maxims of this world and self-love) to be counted fools, to be despised and hated for Christ's sake, and to bear all things patiently: How contrary to self, and the flesh: Therefore, it is the flesh that must be crucified, and the soul made humble and poor in spirit; or we cannot be Christ's disciples.

It is of great use, to examine every duty and action before we enter upon it, and to take God's word as our rule and guide in it; to ask ourselves, why we do it? what is the motive we act from? to enquire thus, ' Will this thing be for God's glory? do I intend *that* as the end? is it according to God's Word? am I in the way of my duty? is it God's way? is it my proper business? what may be the consequence of this? will this promote the divine life of faith and grace in my soul? will this edify or do good to any? do I in this follow Jesus Christ? would he do this,

or

or speak or act thus? am I not seeking praise from men? or doing my own will only? would not this time be better spent in Prayer? &c. Afterwards, it is of use to examine, how we performed every duty; with what views? how much of pride and *self* we discover in it; or of unbelief, or of Satan's devices? &c. Also, before going out on business, or for company, or pleasure, to consider what sin may beset us, what temptation may befall us, and whether it may not be safer for us to decline going, if we are not obliged to it; and to pray to be directed by the Lord, guided by his counsel, and kept in peace and safety by his Providence and Grace; and to consider what views we shall have of what we are about when it be over; whether we shall approve it, or wish it undone: If the latter, forbear to do it: check and deny your will for the present, and much peace and pleasure will be the consequence.

There is in men some besetting sin, constitutional in most; This is apt to betray the soul; we are apt to be blinded and deluded by it; it is infatuating; drawing and exciting the desires and thoughts after it: Therefore, great care and guard is needful against this! for Satan will ever be presenting some suitable object to the mind to stir up this corruption. It is of great use to know *this*; for this is the heart-idol, which so easily betrays us. Prayer to the Lord to cast it out, and for his grace to keep us watchful, and to enable us to overcome it, is our continual duty.

Resting in and trusting to sensible comforts and joys, prevent many from growing into vital Godliness: Joys and comforts are what many seek after, and trust in, as the *essence* of religion. Such pay little regard to any duty, unless it tends to warm their affections, &c. Such observe not what growth of grace they attain, or whether they are transformed into the image of Christ, in patience, purity, and real holiness; but, what joys and comforts they find; neither, whether these joys and comforts arise from a growing conformity to the divine will, in the way of duty, in a close walk with God. But if their affections are warmed—their passions stirred up to sensible comforts, they conclude all is well. Alas! This deceives many! Affecting discourses on Christ, His Love, and what He has done for sinners, and the Love of God, in Christ, displayed; these will warm the heart, and sensibly affect many, who
were

were never converted, or united to Christ, or sanctified through Faith in Him. 'Tis supposed that Satan can and does stir up and greatly advance such joys and comforts as these; nay, that he can excite joys and raptures to a degree beyond those the Holy Spirit gives to real believers; for this increaseth their delusion, strengthens his kingdom in them, keeps them in carnal security, and his *goods are in peace*. Therefore build not so much upon thy joys, comforts, and affections; but see to thy actions, to thy walk with God, to the bent of thy will to glorify God in all things; for this is what God regards.

As there is a holy industry, which enables the soul to grow in grace, and to improve its talents, so there is also a spiritual sloth and indolence which prevents it: This makes the soul like a door turning on its hinge, but never going out of its place. So they, who give way to this sloth, make no advances in the divine life; they will not stretch forth the withered hand in all holy diligence, nor stir up themselves to take hold on Christ's strength, or go forth in dead frames to prayer, and strive and wrestle to be quickened in spiritual strength.—Trusting in frames, is also an hindrance, yet most are apt to do this; and many seem to mistake *frames* for Faith, and trust much upon them. But faith is a trusting to, and resting firmly upon, God's word and promise, venturing the soul upon Christ, as promised and set forth in the Gospel, for our whole salvation; and this we may solidly rely on when we have no lively frames, and from hence arises that solid peace and rest to the soul, which true Faith alone can give. Some weak believers go complaining from place to place, of the badness and deadness of their spiritual state, and seem to lay more dependence on the counsel and advice of others and to expect more from that, than from a direct application to God. To ask advice of a spiritual person is very good, and is often blessed with good effects; but as all our help and comfort must come from God only, on Christ alone we should trust, hope, and rely, for all quickening and renewing Grace; for He is that bread of life which came down from Heaven, which alone can satisfy the soul. "He that cometh to me, shall never hunger, he that believeth on me shall never thirst." John vi. 51.

Much Talking, even of sacred things, has a tendency to draw

draw the soul from a close walk, and communion with God, to prevent secret prayer, or cause us to be remiss in it: Much Talk tends to beget lightness of spirit, to fill the mind with many ideas which unfit us for secret duty, in a spiritual, fervent, waiting upon God: Thoughts of what we have heard or spoken enter in, and prevent the soul's ascending up to God. Much Talking also, tends to spiritual Pride. Solomon says, "In the multitude of words, there wanteth not sin."

Fifthly. To hear, read, and meditate on the word of God, is a principal means to grow in all spiritual knowledge, wisdom, faith, trust, hope, and confidence in God. 'Tis in the Gospel Christ is revealed; this is the glass in which we behold Him, by Faith; this is the Great Charter of Heaven! Here is the covenant of Free Grace and Love set forth and declared, sealed and ratified with the Seal and Oath of the living God. The Scriptures are the rich mines of all heavenly knowledge and wisdom. These are the Christian's treasury: Here are precious things of God, infinite and wonderful! Here is the life, death, doctrine, and legacy of the glorious Redeemer! Here, he bequeaths to us at his death, unsearchable riches of grace; love, blessedness, crowns, kingdoms, rivers of pleasure, endless, boundless glories, and everlasting joy and peace! It must needs be of infinite importance and concern, truly and spiritually to understand the Word of God; and the reason of my not pointing this out as the first principal means of salvation, was, because what I have wrote on the necessity of faith and much prayer, for the teachings of God's Spirit, seems to me absolutely needful, in order to understand and discern the great and wonderful things of God's Word. It is for want of this, so many read the letter, but discern not the hidden spiritual things contained in it: they read the history of Christ, but understand not the glorious mystery of Christ: "For no man knoweth the things of God, but by the Spirit of God: They are foolishness to natural men; nor can they discern them, unless taught of God. The preaching of the Cross is foolishness unto all such; tho' it is the power of God unto salvation to all that believe: Nay, Christ himself, though he is the wisdom of God and the power of God, yea the wisdom of God in a mystery, seemeth a stumbling-block

block to all not taught of God." See 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. and ii. 7, 11, 14. The Word of God is a mystery! we should study and meditate on it day and night; we should always pray, before we read, to be taught of God; as Paul did for the believing Ephesians, chap. iii. "that the Lord would give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation, to open the eyes of our understanding, that we might know the hope of his calling, the exceeding greatness of his power, grace, and love; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, &c." Christ is the mystery of the word, the hidden treasure contained in it; he is the Incarnate Word: All the revelations of God tend to point out Christ, and our great need of him. After prayer, then we should read, to hear what the Lord God will say to us; for in prayer, we speak to God: In hearing or reading his Word, the Lord speaks to us.—'Tis the word of life, 'tis the word of salvation, 'tis the standard of all truth; 'tis the rule of life; it points out the way to Heaven; 'tis the compass to steer by: Here are precepts and directions both for faith and practice in every duty of life. In hearing or reading this blessed Word, we should attend as if we heard the voice of Christ himself speaking to us; we should take heed, as Christ bids us, who and what we hear preached, bringing all to the test of the written Word, and receive nothing but what the Word teacheth, lest we hear men untaught of God oppose or explain away the Scriptures of Truth, and so "the blind lead the blind." This is the fatal error of many who explain all the deep and wonderful mysteries of God by unsanctified Reason, which cannot comprehend them, being as far above Reason, as the Heavens are above the Earth: We may meditate on the Word of God, and discover more and more wonderful things in it to our lives end! When we read any thing which strikes the mind, or what we want to understand, we should stop, and pray to be taught of God: when going to hear it preached, should pray that Christ may open our hearts to understand and believe, as he did Lydia's, Acts xvi. It will enlarge our views, and confirm our faith; to observe the wonderful sublime prophecies of the Old Testament fulfilled in the Gospel. How precious David esteemed the Word of God!

God! "above thousands of gold. O how I love thy Law! 'tis my meditation all the day. I delight in thy Word: 'tis a lamp to my feet, &c." Let us learn, study, and pray much, that we may see the wonderful things of God's Word! Christ says, "Search the Scriptures: for he that heareth my Word, and believeth, hath everlasting life."

Sixthly. Christ is the soul and substance of every ordinance; we should seek to find him in them all: for Christ is our Life! And the holy Communion of his Body and Blood, which Himself hath ordained we should partake of as often as possible. O this is a most divine Ordinance indeed! Here the precious death and passion of Christ is set forth, his wondrous sacrifice of himself, as offered for our sins, in visible signs! Here, by faith, we may feed on Christ; receive him into our hearts, to dwell in us, to heal the diseases of our souls, to impart fresh supplies of spiritual life, grace, faith, and strength to the soul. Here we should come, as to the almighty Physician of the soul, open to him all our diseases, tell him all our wants, shew him all our troubles, believe him present, willing to give all that is really good for us; consider his love, dying to save us! The great God, Creator of all things, incarnate, (made flesh!) that he might in our nature fulfill the law for us, work righteousness to justify us, preach peace and salvation to lost sinners, and then offered up himself as a full atonement and perfect sacrifice for our sins; All who believe are pardoned, justified, and accepted through him. This Sacrament is to seal pardon and peace to our souls; here, poor, helpless sinners are called to receive all this *freely*; not for any merits of ours; not because we have said such and such prayers, read such and such books to prepare us, as many blindly think; No: nothing can make us worthy, but Christ himself! We should go as poor, blind, miserable sinners, to be healed, blessed, and enriched by Christ, freely; carry nothing but faith, and a deep sense of our misery, and of the Lord's will and power to help and bless. We should expect great things, vast blessings out of Christ's fulness! *Fear not, only believe, faith the Lord, "according to your faith you will receive."* What may we not expect from

from this ordinance! If we receive Christ to dwell in us, what life, grace, comfort, joy and peace must we receive! If Christ be in us, he is that *Hope of Glory*! All blessings must come with him: HE IS ALL IN ALL. This Sacrament is a great mystery of faith! 'Tis Faith alone makes it efficacious. We must pray much for Faith: Precious Faith brings Christ and all blessings into the soul. If faith be weak and low, let us go, that the Lord may renew our strength! Christ not only gives himself, and all grace to us, but he also creates faith in us, to enable us to receive him. O let us go, weak, helpless, and wretched, as we are! The Lord alone can heal us. It is the sick *only*, need the physician; nor can any thing on earth heal us, but Christ himself. Reason comprehends nothing of this mystery! Men of reason only, receive nothing but the bread and wine; 'tis Faith alone feeds on Christ and receives him with all his fulness, grace and salvation. Many poor souls have gone to this mysterious Feast, cold and low in faith, but the Lord has met and blessed them so in the ordinance, that they have returned filled with love, joy, and peace: For the Lord blessed and filled them with faith and his presence, so that their souls have been satisfied as with marrow and fatness! thus the Lord fulfilled his promise, "Seek and ye shall find, &c." But if no present refreshment be received, if we went sincerely trusting to Christ to heal, bless, and come into our souls; we should believe we have received him, although at present we have no sense of his presence, yet we may afterwards; for 'tis by faith we live, and not by sense, or frames.

Seventhly. Another means to advance the divine life in the soul, is, To seek and pray much to comprehend the glorious mystery of the Person of Christ. This is a wonderful mystery indeed! to see God in Christ in the glorious Fulness of the Godhead!—The Angels desire to behold the mystery! Christ says, "He that seeth me, seeth the Father: I and the Father are one." When by faith we see God in Christ, it is transforming to the soul; *changing us into the same image*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Christ is the Image and Glory of the invisible God! In Christ, we may see what the great and glorious God is: In the life and actions of Christ, we see almighty power, infinite wisdom, amazing love, goodness, truth, mercy and grace! see him walking

on the sea, stilling storms and winds by his word : raising the dead to life, healing the souls and bodies of men by his word ; quickening dead souls to life ; devils subject to his word ; preaching pardon and peace to lost sinners ; forgiving sins ; and at last dying on the cross, to save his guilty offending people ! Here is love, amazing ! boundless ! and surpassing all knowledge ! Here is God's wondrous love displayed !—Well might the Apostle cry out, " Behold ! What manner of love is this, that vile sinners should become the sons of God ! " This is a mystery too great to comprehend ! we may wonder and adore, but not attain to know fully the mystery of Redeeming Love ! In Christ, we may see as much as we are capable of ; nor is there any way to know God truly, but in Christ : " No man knoweth the Father but the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him." Matt. xi. 27. Nor can any man know Christ, but by the Father. He is the incomprehensible Jehovah, equal and of one essence with the Father : He is not only King of kings, and Lord of lords, but he has a name which no man knoweth but himself : Rev. xix.

12. For no man or angel can comprehend the Eternal God ! Yet This wondrous God veiled his glory in *flesh*, to save Sinners ! He was "*God manifest in flesh*," that we might see, behold, and converse with him ; which we could not, had he appeared in glory : for when on the mount, somewhat of his glory shined through his cloaths, so that they became glistening, and his face shone like the Sun ; his disciples could not bear the glory, but fell down as dead ! Yet to this glorious Saviour We are united, by faith ! and he dwells in us by his Spirit, imparting light, grace, strength, and all spiritual life to the soul. The more we can apprehend Christ by faith in this glorious mystery, the more we are quickened, renewed, and changed into his image. Christ is more to the soul than the Sun is to the world ; the Sun gives light, life, and power to all nature ; so does the *Sun of Righteousness* to the soul ! Nothing would live or grow in the earth, was it not for the sun : so nothing good can grow in the soul, but through the Spirit of Christ. In winter all nature seemeth dead, because the Sun is so far removed ; and in the spring, when the Sun returns, all nature revives and flourishes ; just so, when Jesus withdraws from the soul, nothing but darkness,

darkness, deadness, and discomfort is there ; but when the Lord arises on the soul, with healing under his wings, all faith, love and grace are in exercise. As the Sun imparts light and benefit to all, without emptying or diminishing its own light and glory ; so can the Lord Jesus fill and bless all with all blessedness of salvation, life, grace, and righteousness, without withdrawing from any, or diminishing his own infinite fulness ! Could we attain more to know the Lord thus, and draw near to him in actions of faith and love, we should be more transformed into his divine image. For this we should study, meditate, strive and pray ; for Christ is our life, strength, and righteousness, and we are *complete* in Him ; and truly to know Him, is eternal life and glory.

This glorious Redeemer is also “ entered into heaven with his own blood, now to appear in the presence of God for us ! As our Advocate to intercede for us ; as our great High-Priest, to offer our prayers, perfumed with the rich incense of his infinite merits ; as God and Man in Christ, exalting our nature, bringing fallen man to be reconciled to God, and into union with himself, having obtained eternal redemption, and the gift of the Holy Ghost for us ; and as our Fore-runner, taking possession of Heaven for us ! He is a vital head of divine influences to every true Believer, who is united to him by one spirit, and as a living member of his mystical body, receiveth spiritual life, and all grace out of his infinite fulness. “ Because he lives, we shall live also.”

It is also of great benefit in our christian warfare, to know how to live by Faith in times of temptation, darkness, trouble of conscience, after any falls, or in times of great trial or affliction, or when the Lord hides his face from us, and we are called to exercise Faith and Patience : — Then to be enabled to trust and rest on the Lord Jesus ; to commit body and soul to him ; to cast every burthen and care upon him ; for the Lord to carry us in his arms through all temptations and trials ; to *act* Faith in his Blood daily and hourly, for pardon of all sin ; to take hold of his strength under weakness ; to look unto him for light in darkness, for support under all trials ; to pray and believe that the Lord will be our strength, and deliver us in time, and make all things work together for our

good; and by faith and patience, to wait the Lord's time. Christ is our life and strength at all times!—Let us, as commanded, in Isaiah l. 10, "When we walk in darkness and have no light, let us trust in the name of the Lord and be stayed on our God!" Learn to live by faith at all times, and go unto Christ under all burdens, trials, and temptations, that we may find rest and peace to our souls in him. It is also of singular benefit to our peace and consolation, to have right and clear views of Christ's righteousness imputed to us, as *our* righteousness, to justify us before God: This is that which the Apostle desired to be found in, Phil. iii. 9.

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. God so loved the world, that he gave his eternal Son to save us;" displaying his infinite love to the fallen race! Yet, herein appears the dreadful enmity of man against God: In hating to believe or acknowledge God in Christ. All profess to love God: But when the blessed God appears, so as to be known, almost all would not have Him to reign over them, but persecuted him to death.—So it is *now*: If any profess to love Jesus Christ, and own Him as God, hatred and enmity presently appear against him! This is Satan's device to keep men from all true knowledge of God: For there is no knowledge of God to any benefit, but as he is, in Jesus Christ. "The God of this world (*the Devil*) hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto them." 2 Cor. ix. 4. And because the world is agreed to despise this way of knowing God, in Christ, and to count them as fools and enthusiasts that do, we are often tempted to be ashamed of this cause before men, fearing to lose our friends, our credit and worldly interest; unwilling to be counted fools, or suffer harm or loss; to be hated by the world—we would keep good terms with the world, are afraid of its scoffs and contempt; we dare not speak a word for Christ's glory, cause, and truth, when we hear it opposed or despised.

Oh! This is a great hindrance to many; (it hath been so to me!) being ashamed to own boldly the doctrines and glory of Christ, at certain times of trial, to the wounding of the conscience and quenching of the Spirit. This is a strong hold of Satan! tempting us to try to serve

two masters, tho' Christ tells us, " 'Tis impossible!" This prevents many from following the Lord heartily: Carnal wisdom pleads for this, altho' the Lord says, " If any man be ashamed of Him and his words, in this evil generation, of them will He be ashamed, before his Father, the angels, and the whole assembly of Heaven and Earth," Mark viii. 38.—History shews us dreadful examples of some eminently good men who have fallen by this temptation, when some critical time of trial has called them to appear boldly for the Truth, tho' at the hazard of place, favour, riches, or even life itself. Trying to preserve God's favour and man's too, have kept them from owning the Lord's cause openly, so they gave it up: but the Lord mocked them for trying to keep terms with him and his enemies too; for the very evils they thought to shun, the Lord hath brought upon them. I could name some of these, whose history has made me to tremble, and to cry out, " Wonderful art Thou, O Lord! and just are Thy Judgements."—On the contrary, I have read of some, who bravely ventured *all* for the Lord's cause; and yet, through the power and wisdom of God, have preserved the esteem of God and man too. Blessed are all who truly trust in Him! For the Lord maketh all things work together for good to them that fear and love him, but confoundeth the devices of men. For, " Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: But whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, and the Gospel's, the same shall save it." Mark viii. 35.

We must " have some *persecution*, if we live godly in Christ Jesus." If the Lord hath chosen us, the World will hate us: But the Lord hath said, " Blessed are ye, when men shall revile, persecute, and say all manner of evil of you, *falsely*, for my Name's sake! Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: nay, leap for joy! for *great* is your reward in Heaven." Matt. v. 11, 12. and Luke vi. 22, 23.—It is given as a great blessing to suffer any thing for Christ, and we should rejoice when called to it.

Eighthly. The Apostle says, " Be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Heb. vi. 12. And be diligent lest there be a root of bitterness, or any heart-idol, which quencheth the Spirit, and prevents the growth of Faith and Holiness in the soul. Any sin indulged, or known duty omitted, will hinder the soul's progress in the divine life, and greatly

hurt our peace of mind. We are Pilgrims, travelling towards Zion: O let us press forward, towards the Prize! Let us not be content with any measure of Faith or Grace already received; but let us fight, strive, pray without ceasing, to attain more and more of Christ's unsearchable riches!—to grow into his spirit; to be dead to the world; to have our conversation more in Heaven; and to consider this life as a dream, a land of shadows, which we are passing from, and shall soon be in Eternity! An endless, boundless Eternity is at hand!—Oh! consider what *Eternity* is!—Millions and millions of years may pass away, and vast Eternity will still be but *beginning*! A few days, months, and years, at most, will bring us all into this endless, unchangeable state! O my friends, let us look forwards, and by faith take realizing views of unseen things—by meditation and faith bring them near, so as to impress the soul deeply, and make them as present to us! Faith and prayer will give us sweet evidences of unseen things, and raise the heart and affections to things above. We should endeavour to be awfully impressed with a deep sense of the Omnipresence of God, so as to speak and act as if we saw Him who is invisible! This enabled Moses to act so valiantly for God, and not fear the wrath of the king: and this will keep us from the fear of man, from a trifling spirit, vain words, waste of time, and stir us up to diligence, to work while it is day; and whatsoever we can do, to glorify God, or to benefit man, to do it with all our might; to watch, strive, and pray, making our calling and election sure; to run our race with patience, looking unto Jesus for all life, strength, and grace, and, as our great Example, bearing the Cross; and be ready to own and confess Jesus before men, if called to it, that He may own and confess us before God, angels, and men. O let our life and example declare whose we are, let them edify, teach, and reprove! All men cannot understand doctrines, but all men are judges of a holy life; the fruits declare what the tree is; And it is remarkable, that at the day of judgment, as Christ hath represented it, in Matt. xxv. no mention is made of Faith, but by their *works* they are judged; because good works are the fruits of faith, they prove whether faith was real, and saving, or nominal only: Not that any works can justify us or have any part in justification; for we are justified *freely*, by faith in Jesus Christ;

Christ; his Blood pardons, and his Righteousness, imputed to us, justifies us, when we believe; and all proceed from the free love and mercy of God, all a free gift of his Grace. Yet, good works (as St. James speaks) "justify before men, for by these they can judge whether Faith be living or dead;" and so at the last day, our works will declare whether we did believe or not. Christ hath chosen us that we should bring forth much fruit; "He that keepeth my commands, he it is that loveth me." John xiv. 21, & xv. 16. It is by being vitally united to Christ by faith, that we can bring forth any good fruit; and it is a great mystery of faith and holy living, to go quite out of *Self*, to rest, trust, and believe on Christ *alone* for our whole salvation, and to be zealous and fruitful in all good works; yet not trust or rely on them at all for justification, but on Christ *only*, "who is wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and complete redemption to all *true believers* :— Blessed are all, who thus trust in him!"

In the general Thanksgiving of our Church, we pray, "that we may be *given up* to God's service, and walk before him in holiness and righteousness all our days." O what a great thing it is, to be given up to God's service in all things! All I have said and pointed out in these Directions scarce amounts to this! This is all I plead for, all I would persuade to: To be given up to God in all things, is to be holy indeed! Some would do well to consider this, who use this petition before God, and yet oppose and are enemies to vital holiness in practice. O that I could persuade all sincere Christians to devote themselves entirely to God! 'Tis for this very end I lay before them these few directions, assuredly believing, if duly practised, through the grace of Christ, they will enable us to glorify God in our lives, and at our deaths; to live holy and happy, to die in peace, and so to enter into the eternal joy of our Lord!

Lastly. We should be much in praise and thanksgiving for all the blessings already bestowed on us—ever praising God for Jesus Christ, for in him and through him we have all blessings in time and eternity. I have avoided every disputable point, and enforced nothing but what appears to me necessary to be believed and attempted to be practised by all real Christians: Nor have I advanced any thing but what I know by blessed experience, and have found the benefit

nefit and comfort of, *myself*. I now fend them forth, hoping the Lord will bless and sanctify them to the good and consolation of many of his weaker children, whose real edification and growth in all grace I much desire, and pray daily for : and I beg of all such, to pray the Lord to bless and apply them to their hearts by his Spirit before they read them (as they should all books, if they expect any benefit by them) ; for it is the blessing and grace of Christ is ALL in ALL. It is by the Lord's Power and spirit alone, that any thing can profit the soul. The Instrument is nothing : God can use weak and foolish means, in order to glorify his wisdom, power, and grace. It is written, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit! saith the Lord of Hosts." The Lord chooseth base and weak things ; can cause a worm to thresh the mountain, and by babes and children perfect his own praise ! I have no end to serve, but my Saviour's glory ; nor have I any hope of its being blest to his people's good, but through the blessing and Spirit of Christ, my Lord, who hath been my all-sufficient God and guide through my pilgrimage now drawing to an end, desiring nothing but to depart, and to be with Christ.

I could have added much more, but feared being tedious : Such as they are, I commit to the grace and blessing of the glorious Redeemer ! In whose name I send them forth.

May Thy Blessing, O Christ ! accompany them ; and Thy Spirit sanctify and apply them, to the comfort and benefit of many souls, and to Thy praise and glory who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Spirit in ONE ETERNAL JEHOVAH ! To whom be all honour, glory, thanks and praise, by Angels and Men, for ever and ever ! AMEN.

CONSOLATORY LETTERS

To one who seemed drawing near to his Dissolution.

Written by an eminent Christian (now with God).

LETTER I.

Dear Friend,

I Am glad that you have no fear or doubt of your eternal happy state, in the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ ; but have a comfortable assurance, that you are
freely

freely pardon'd, justified, and accepted in Christ, through the riches of God's free grace and love; and that you are *passed from death unto life*. I should be glad also, that you were entirely resign'd to the Divine Will concerning your stay in the body. Be content to wait the Lord's time; Something remains to be done in you and by you, during your stay in the body; perhaps it may be for the glory of God and your felicity, if He should prolong your life. Be willing to wait upon Earth a while longer, if the Lord pleases: Commit yourself wholly to the Lord, and pray to have no will but His; and be assured, that if Providence is so disposed as to continue your life, that it shall answer some purpose for God's glory either in Grace, or Providence, or both. — Our Title to Heaven stands in Christ's atonement and righteousness; but our Meetness for glory, in the work of the Holy Ghost, in a principle of grace, holiness, and sanctification; in the perfection thereof at death: And an additional Meetness for additional glories, by the Holy Spirit's assistance given us for the exercise of our various graces, under various providences, prosperous or adverse.

Where God designs to confer additional glories, He gives opportunities for the exercise of our various graces. Thus afflictions evidently are to prepare us for greater glory, and serve to enrich our immortal crown, as the Apostle says, "*Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*" Therefore give up yourself entirely to be prepared for glory in the Lord's way, and be quite willing to suffer, till the Lord shall deliver you for ever. You have but a little time to glorify God in upon earth: Heaven is coming, and eternal shall be your enjoyment! All the sickness, pains, and increasing decays of nature will end in the death of the whole body of sin and sorrow, for ever and ever. Glad am I that you pray much daily, to be resigned to the divine Will, and that of late you have had a greater sense of the divine presence in prayer, and find nearness to the throne of Grace, and more faith in a persuasion of your being heard; and that you have assurance sometimes, that what you ask shall be granted: These are happy fruits of the Holy Ghost's being given you as a spirit of grace and supplication, giving you access thro' Christ unto the Father.

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'Tis the Spirit helps you to pray in faith; It makes intercession in or for us with unutterable groanings, and gives us persuation that our prayers shall be granted: as the Apostle saith, "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask any thing according to his Will, he heareth us: And if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we asked of him." O this one blessed privilege of Prayer is inestimable; God's people are praying people; they are acquainted with God, speak often to Him in Prayer, they pour out their hearts before him, shew him all their troubles: To such the Lord reveals himself, as he does not unto the world; such have much intercourse with heaven, which enobles and enriches the soul with all precious influences of Grace, Faith, and Love, from the presence of Jesus Christ.—I rejoice that you increase in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and delight in the mystery of the Incarnate God! His Riches of grace and glory are a mine of heavenly treasure, which we shall live upon for ever—Finite minds may admire and adore, but can never comprehend it!—We shall receive out of his unsearchable riches full and free communications of Love, to a vast Eternity! We shall drink freely of the Rivers of pleasure which are at God's Right Hand for evermore—which proceed out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb—which will satisfy the soul abundantly, and fill it with a Transport of Joy and glory, never to be interrupted, never to be ended!

Bear then with *patience* your lingering illness: Say, "The cup which my father giveth me, shall I not drink it?"—Only endure, and you shall come out of the furnace of affliction with great advantage? purged from all your tin and dross, and made meet to dwell with a holy God, in perfect happiness, when you have (at death) attained perfect Holiness: For Holiness is Happiness *begun*, and when compleated at death, it will be *perfect* Happiness in Glory.—Wait then, the Lord's time, 'till you are purged and sanctified meet for Heaven. In the mean time take frequent refreshing views of unseen things: Meditate on that glory that shall be revealed to you ere long. Take a *Pisgah* prospect of that promised land; view the glories of the *new Jerusalem*—those Crowns of Glory, Rivers of Pleasures, and that Fulness of unspeakable Bliss, which flow from the enjoyment

enjoyment of the ever blessed Three-One GOD! 'Tis this that will so fill the Souls of the blessed Company of Heaven with such enflamed raptures of love and joy, as to make them cry out day and night, "*Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty! Salvation, Glory, Honour, and Praise be unto God, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever!*"—These wondrous Glories may possibly dazzle you while in this mortal body, but the immortal soul, when dislodged from flesh and made perfect, shall be strengthened and enabled to bear all this Glory in full blaze: For "*Christ hath redeemed us, and made us Kings and Priests unto God; and we shall reign with him in glory for ever and ever!*"

Fear not the dark passage of Death; Christ will be with you, and make darkness light, before you. He will support you in his everlasting arms; when your heart and flesh faileth, the Lord will be your strength, joy, and portion for ever. You and I shall soon meet in Heaven—May the Lord grant us both such realizing views of unseen things, and such a fullness of his Presence, as may enable us to finish our course with exceeding joy! shall be the Prayer of

Your's, in Christ Jesus, &c.

LETTER II.

Dear Friend,

I Rejoice to hear that the Lord hath been with you in your affliction, supporting you so as to make it pleasant, and giving you a sweet persuasion, that in the unknown passage of death, he will visit you with unknown light and comfort. You may depend upon his Promises; for there shall be a performance, by His almighty power, grace, and infinite faithfulness. He that supported you under and carried you through the trials of Life, will never leave you in any of the sorrows of Death. When friends cannot help you, when your own heart and flesh fail you; then the Lord will be your all-sufficient Strength, to uphold and protect you; He will never leave you, nor forsake you. Rest upon his omnipotent arm that is underneath to bear you up; upon his infinite love, which will be then your comfort. God will so appear for you in your passage through death, that you shall set up a memorial to the praise of infinite Grace and Goodness in the land of bliss. Christ will stand between you and danger, until you are passed over the waters of death: He will divide the waters before you, and cause you to pass through those depths as on dry land. In the intricate mazes of death, Jesus will be your guide: He will give you cordials that you shall not faint. He will be your light in darkness, your joy in sorrow, your life in death; and make you perfect in the passage, and receive you to himself into eternal bliss and glory.

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As soon as your soul is dislodged from its tenement of clay, it will be carried to the blissful bosom of your Beloved; Angels will guard your ascending way---Jesus will "present you all perfect in His Perfections, before the presence of his Father's glory, with exceeding joy." And, O what a glorious welcome will you find, when, as a weary pilgrim, you are brought safe in triumph to the promised Land!---God, in all his Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, will rejoice over you; and you shall enter into the immediate vision of Love and Communion with your Three-One God, which shall be full, perfect, and glorious in transports of Bliss, through the countless ages of Eternity! Saints and angels, in one general assembly, will welcome you home to be a partaker with them of eternal Glory! Then you will join the heavenly hosts in singing everlasting songs of Praise and Glory to God!---Then the astonishing mysteries of Providence shall be opened to your enlarged soul--Then you will adore and praise the wondrous ways of God for ever!---Then your soul, enflamed and perfected in love, shall join the heavenly choir of Saints and Angels, with all the blessed company of Heaven, to sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb, to cry out, with tongues of sacred fire, in endless extasies of joy, "*Great and marvelous are Thy Works, O Lord God Almighty! Hallelujah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!*"

Soon you will be in that City, whose builder and maker is God!---The Tree of Life in the midst of the Paradise of God, shall for ever exclude every kind and degree of Death. "*The Lamb shall lead you to living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all Tears from your Eyes, and redeem you from all Distress.*" Christ is entered into Heaven as the public Head of all Believers, as our Fore-runner, to prepare mansions of eternal glory in his Father's House for us. He will receive our Spirits at the dissolution of our Bodies into his Joy and Glory--Our dying flesh shall also sleep in Jesus, it is his charge; and He will raise it up in glory, and fashion it like his own most glorious Body--And so our whole Persons at the Resurrection Morn shall be again united, to live and reign with Him in unknown Blessedness, thro' immense Eternity!

May the Lord enable you to act Faith upon him, and those amazing Glories revealed and promised in the Word and Covenant of Grace! May God the Holy Ghost give you such realizing Views of Things unseen, by Faith, and such substantial evidences of Things hoped for, as may bring much Joy and peace to your Soul, and cause you to anticipate the Joys of Heaven! And may the Lord Jesus be with your Spirit, and enable you to rest in full assurance, that *neither Death, nor Life, Things present, nor Things to come, shall ever separate you from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!*

I am Yours, in our dear Lord, &c.

